

BROWARD COUNTY AND EMERGENCY PLANNING

Prepared by

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Good morning Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Waxman and Committee members. My name is Tony Carper. I am the Director of Emergency Management for Broward County, Florida. This is a jurisdiction in South Florida composed of the Greater Fort Lauderdale area. We are a very diverse community of 1.7 million residents and millions more visitors annually.

I have been Director in Broward County since 1993 and before that had 13 years serving in Brevard County, Florida. This is over 25 years dealing with emergencies in Florida. I am the current President of the Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference and on the Board of Directors of the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association and past President of that organization.

Since 1995, Broward County has declared fourteen States of Emergency due to hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and wildfires. During emergency situations our County charter and State statute provide that our Mayor and County Manager have command and control authority of the situation.

With the resources we have available local efforts are geared toward holding the line until outside resources arrive. The bottom line is that catastrophic emergencies whether they be instigated by terrorism or natural events quickly overwhelm the resources of local and state governments. There is and always will be a requirement for an effective national response system to handle these types of events. However, local emergency planning in preparing for and getting this assistance is vital for successful outcomes.

In Broward County this planning is contained in the Broward County Comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan. This plan is based on the principle that local governments bear the initial responsibility for response to an emergency. As a corollary to this principle, each level of government accomplishes the functions for which it is responsible requesting assistance from the next higher level of government only after resources at that level are clearly inadequate to cope with the effects of the situation.

Chapter 252, Florida Statutes (State Emergency Management Act), requires that political subdivisions develop emergency plans which are consistent and coordinated with the emergency planning of State government. This Comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan fulfills this requirement and establishes a framework through which the governments and agencies of

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Broward County will prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the impacts of a major or catastrophic emergency which would adversely affect the health, safety and general welfare of its residents.

The plan is strategically oriented and addresses the operational concepts and responsibilities of coordinated County emergency response, relief, and recovery. This plan describes the basic strategies, assumptions and mechanisms through which the County governments and agencies will mobilize resources and conduct activities to guide and support efforts for emergency response and recovery.

To facilitate effective intergovernmental operations, the emergency plan adopts a functional approach that groups emergency response according to roles and responsibilities. Each function is headed by a lead and/or co-lead agency, which has been selected based on its authorities, resources, and capabilities in the functional area. These functional groupings among County, municipal, and other agencies are collectively designated as the Broward Emergency Response Team (BERT) and serve as the primary mechanism through which Broward County governments and agencies will respond to a major or catastrophic emergency. Overall coordination will be provided by the Broward Emergency Management Agency (BEMA) on behalf of the County Administrator and the Broward County Board of County Commissioners under the authority and auspices of this plan.

Those portions of the plan addressing local emergency response capabilities were developed by the respective emergency function subcommittees of the Broward County Emergency Planning Task Force with input from all the appropriate primary and support agencies. The Basic Plan element was developed by the Central Steering Committee for the Task Force and contains input from local government officials and representatives of volunteer agencies. I have the overall responsibility for the development and continued maintenance of this plan and assuring that prompt and effective actions can and will be taken to respond and recover from the effects of a major or catastrophic emergency.

This plan is based on certain assumptions and the existence of specific resources and capabilities which may be subject to frequent change. Actual measures taken by Broward County to respond to each situation will be tailored to each emergency situation. As such, a great deal of flexibility is built into the implementation of this plan.

The plan establishes the organizational concepts for an effective system of comprehensive emergency management.

The purpose of the plan is to:

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- Reduce the vulnerability of people and communities of the County to damage, injury, and loss of life and property resulting from major or catastrophic emergencies.
- Prepare for prompt and efficient response and recovery to protect lives and property affected by emergencies.
- Respond to emergencies using all systems, plans and resources necessary to preserve the health, safety and welfare of persons affected by the emergency.
- Recover from emergencies by providing for the rapid and orderly start of restoration and rehabilitation of persons and property affected by emergencies.
- Provide an emergency management system embodying all aspects of pre-emergency preparedness, post-emergency response, recovery, and mitigation.

This plan encompasses the following:

- Describes the various types of events which are considered to be likely to occur.
- Establishes the concepts under which the governments and agencies of Broward County will operate in response to major or catastrophic emergencies by:
 - Defining the responsibilities of each functional area of response.
 - Defining the emergency response organization and structure.
- Establishes the framework for detailed supportive planning by county agencies, municipalities, private and voluntary organizations, and provides for expeditious, effective, and coordinated employment of available resources before, during and after a major or catastrophic emergency.
- Identifies actions required by County and Municipal governments to obtain assistance and relief from the State, quasi-governmental and private organizations, and the federal government.

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- Establishes fundamental policies, program strategies and assumptions.
- Establishes a concept of operations spanning the direction and control of an emergency from initial monitoring through post-disaster response and recovery.
- Defines an interagency coordination mechanism to facilitate delivery of immediate assistance, and direction and control of response and recovery resources.
- Assigns specific functional areas of responsibilities to appropriate County and municipal departments and agencies, as well as private sector groups and volunteer organizations.
- Addresses the various types of emergencies which are likely to occur, from minor to major or catastrophic.
- Identifies actions that County response and recovery organizations will take, in coordination with their state and federal counterparts.

In order for a county-wide emergency management plan to be effective, it is imperative that all departments, agencies, divisions and municipalities participate in the development of such a plan. A comprehensive planning process was developed for Broward County's plan which included several steps to ensure participation of all agencies and organizations that would respond to and recover from such events.

Broward County established an emergency planning task force led by an Executive Steering Committee, and comprised of subcommittees which would be aligned functionally with the emergency support functions identified within the State and Federal plans.

The Executive Steering Committee is responsible for the oversight of the plan development and review. The Executive Steering Committee is a management team whose membership consists of senior County executives.

In addition, there is a subcommittee for each function. A designated lead department and primary agency is responsible to the steering committee for its organization's composition and the completion of assigned tasks. Support agencies serving on respective emergency function subcommittees are appointed by the steering committee. The support agencies represent private,

state, municipal, volunteer, county and any other appropriate organizations. Their input and participation in the process is vital to the success of Broward County's plan.

Each emergency function subcommittee has developed an annex which is part of the Broward County Comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan. Each emergency function subcommittee reconvenes at least annually to review the plan and suggest appropriate recommendations to the steering committee.

A lead department may be responsible for more than one emergency function; therefore, each department has appointed an emergency coordinator to ensure that all emergency functions are participating in the development and revision processes. The emergency coordinators were trained by BEMA to serve as process consultants and monitors for the steering committee.

A draft of the final plan is distributed to each municipality for review and comment. After the plan is considered complete, the Steering Committee reviews the entire plan and recommends the plan for adoption by the County. This process is also followed for all major revisions and additions.

Emergency Conditions and Assumptions

A major natural, technological or terrorism related emergency will overwhelm the capabilities of Broward County and its municipalities to provide prompt and effective emergency response and emergency short-term recovery measures. Transportation infrastructure may be damaged and local transportation services could be disrupted. There is the potential for widespread damage to commercial telecommunications facilities which would impair the ability of governmental and emergency response agencies to communicate.

Homes, public buildings, and other critical facilities and equipment may be destroyed or severely damaged. Debris may make streets and highways impassable. The movement of emergency supplies and resources could be seriously impeded. Public utilities may be damaged and either fully or partially inoperable. Some county and municipal emergency personnel would be victims of the emergency and prevent them from performing their assigned emergency duties. Numerous separate hazardous conditions and other emergencies as a result of the major event could be anticipated.

Thousands of emergency victims may be forced from their homes and large numbers of dead and injured could be expected. Many victims will be in life-threatening situations requiring immediate rescue and medical care. There

could be shortages of a wide variety of supplies necessary for emergency survival. Hospitals, nursing homes, pharmacies and other health/medical facilities may be severely damaged or destroyed. Medical and health care facilities that remain in operation will be overwhelmed by the number of victims requiring medical attention. Medical supplies and equipment will be in short supply.

Damage to fixed facilities which generate, produce, use, store or dispose of hazardous materials could result in the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Food processing and distribution capabilities may be severely damaged or destroyed. There could be minimal to total disruption of energy sources and prolonged electric power failure.

Broward County has a population estimated at approximately 1.7 million people. As the second most populated county in Florida, Broward could easily experience a loss of life and property of catastrophic proportion from a series of potential hazards. The following statistical statements are provided relative to the County's vulnerability:

- The concept of operations outlined in this plan assumes that a major or catastrophic emergency has occurred and that the need exists for the immediate activation of this plan and mobilization of emergency response forces and support functions.
- Damage may be extensive and many areas could experience casualties, property loss, disruption of normal life support systems, and loss of economic, physical and social infrastructures.
- The Broward County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be activated and the State Emergency Operations Center (State EOC) may be activated.
- In support of this plan, the primary and support agencies of each emergency support function have developed emergency operations procedures.
- If the emergency is major or catastrophic in nature, it is assumed that the Governor of the State of Florida will request activation of the Federal Response Plan and federal resources, coordinated through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), will be deployed to the affected areas to provide assistance to local governments.

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- The magnitude of the emergency may be such that effective emergency response and recovery may be beyond the capability of the County and its municipalities. If this is the case, it is assumed that State assistance will be requested. If the situation is beyond the capability of County and State resources to manage, the Governor will request that federal disaster assistance programs be implemented to supplement local emergency resources to help meet the needs of the areas affected.
- It is assumed that many local emergency response personnel will experience casualties and damage to their homes and personal property and will themselves be victims of the disaster.
- It is assumed that, in addition to state and perhaps federal assistance, prompt and effective emergency response will require mutual aid from other political subdivisions throughout the state and from other states.
- During major and catastrophic emergencies, it is assumed that the Federal Emergency Management Agency will immediately task Department of Defense resources for immediate response to the emergency response and recovery effort.
- It is assumed that citizens and response organizations from other counties and states will send massive amounts of food, clothing and other supplies in response to what they perceive Broward County's needs to be.
- It is assumed that competition among Broward County citizens and communities for scarce resources will be great.

Policies and Execution

Utilizing the concepts of operations expressed within, this plan will be activated based on the scope of a particular emergency situation and the determination by the Mayor, in conjunction with County Administrator, for partial or total mobilization of County emergency government.

The Broward Emergency Management Agency (BEMA) coordinates preparedness aspects of this plan to include information and coordination on a continuous basis. This Agency recommends activation of the plan during threats of emergency, coordinates operational procedures, and implements emergency response actions as might be necessary for the immediate protection of life and property prior to issuance of a Proclamation of a State of

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Emergency by the Mayor, or designee in consultation with the County Administrator providing a regular or special meeting of the County Commission when it cannot be practically convened.

During major and catastrophic emergencies, this serves as the basis of relief to our communities and also provides the mechanism to receive and organize State and Federal relief efforts. It is imperative that these activities commence immediately and expeditiously once a request for such assistance has been made.

Finally, we know disasters will strike. No matter how prepared we are, we know people will be hurt. And that means that our ongoing commitment to improving response and recovery is just as important as every other initiative we undertake.

These are our responsibilities. The achievements and gains of the last several years should be continued. It is my belief that State and Local officials, far more than any other, will determine whether this vision for disaster resistance succeeds.